

they competed throughout the summer. Gladstone now enjoys the distinction of being the third team from Delta County to reach the Little League Softball World Series.

Girls Little League Softball, which began in 1974, has provided countless young women an opportunity to compete at a high level. Through the instruction they receive on and off the field, these young women gain valuable skills that will help them achieve success throughout their lifetime. The 2007 Gladstone All-Star 11–12 year-old Girls Softball Team includes Jordan Schwartz, Ashley Hough, Jammie Botruff, Heather Sanderson, Jordan Kowalski, Nicole Sharon, Shannon Wolf, Neena Brockway, Alison Austin, Nikki Barteld, Averi Kanyuh. The coaching staff includes Manager Andrew Schwartz and Assistant Coach John Nevala.

This is a summer these young women will certainly never forget. I know I am joined by their family, friends and supporters, as well as my colleagues in the Senate, in congratulating the entire team on a highly successful and memorable season. I look forward to hearing about many more successes from these young ladies in the future.●

TRIBUTE TO CURTIS H. SYKES

● Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise to honor the life of a great Arkansan, Curtis H. Sykes, who passed away last week.

As a member of the Special Task Force to Study the History and Contributions of Slave Laborers in the Construction of the U.S. Capitol, Mr. Sykes made valuable contributions to the important and challenging work that the task force conducted. As its name indicates, the purpose of the task force is to recognize and preserve the contributions that African Americans made to the construction of the Capitol complex. The task force has served as a working memorial to pay tribute to those who made an enormous sacrifice to help build the greatest symbol of our Nation's freedom. I was pleased that the task force was developed to include citizen representation, and Curtis Sykes was an integral part of helping us examine those contributions.

In addition to his work on the task force, Curtis Sykes was also an accomplished historian and respected community leader in Arkansas. Mr. Sykes served as chairman of the Arkansas Black History Committee since 1993 and was the first African-American member of the North Little Rock History Commission. He brought a wealth of experience to the study of our great State's history and was an advocate for equality, fairness, and justice.

Shortly after his graduation from the segregated Scipio A. Jones High School, located in his hometown of North Little Rock, in 1947, Curtis served our Nation in the U.S. Army from 1950 to 1952. He then pursued a lifelong career in education.

Prior to retiring in 1985, Curtis worked for 33 years in education as a teacher, football coach, assistant principal and principal. He was one of the first African-American principals in the Little Rock school district during the 1960s, and after his life in education, he led the fight to pass legislation in the Arkansas General Assembly which established a Black history curriculum in Arkansas schools.

He also continued to pursue his passion to help young children learn and succeed after retirement through his work in a number of civic and community organizations. His activities included offices in the Arkansas Chapter of the NAACP, the Young YMCA/COPE of Central Arkansas and Headstart of Pulaski County.

Mr. Sykes earned his bachelor's degree from Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock, Arkansas; a master's from Texas College in Tyler, Texas; and his master's in education from Harding University in Searcy, AR. In fact, he became the first African American to receive a degree from Harding in 1962.

In addition, Mr. Sykes received a number of honors and awards during his lifetime. He was the recipient of the Salute to Greatness Award from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission for his outstanding record of community service. He was also recognized by the city of North Little Rock when Mayor Patrick Hays declared a Curtis Sykes Day in 1992 to honor his many contributions to the city.

Curtis H. Sykes will be greatly missed by communities all across Arkansas, as well as those he worked with here in Washington, DC. He had an impact on thousands of people from all walks of life, and his death will leave a void throughout Arkansas.

He will not be forgotten, however. The Arkansas History Commission contains the Curtis H. Sykes Collection which includes Scipio High yearbooks, past Arkansas Teacher Association journals, and other North Little Rock memorabilia and documents which will enable future generations to learn about his life and legacy.

In the weeks and months ahead, our thoughts and prayers will be with friends and family of the Sykes as they grieve the loss of a true Arkansas pioneer.●

HONORING MARY AND BILL KIRCHNER

● Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I honor two of my constituents on a very special and rare milestone. Later this month, Mary and Bill Kirchner of Atlanta will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

Mary and Bill were married on September 28, 1957, in Grosse Pointe, MI, bringing together two of that city's longtime families—the Fitzsimons and the Kirchners. The next 50 years took Mary and Bill from Michigan to South Carolina and finally to Georgia, where they have lived since 1988.

Bill was a homebuilder in Michigan and on Hilton Head Island, SC, and later started his own property rental business on the island. Mary started her own successful business on Hilton Head called The Welcome Mat, then switched careers and put her salesmanship to good use selling real estate. When they moved to Atlanta, Mary and Bill decided to try an entirely new business venture by opening an antique consignment shop. Sixteen years later, Now & Again remains a beautiful and popular shop in Buckhead. In fact, my wife Dianne has been a customer. Although they have certainly earned the right to retire, Mary and Bill still run their shop 6 days a week with the help of a great staff.

While their professional lives have been an adventure, Mary and Bill made their biggest life-changing decision early on in their marriage. On a chilly February day in 1964, a nervous Mary and Bill arrived at an adoption agency in Michigan hoping to hear that they would be allowed to adopt a baby. Instead, the agency asked if Mary and Bill would like to go home with 6-month-old twin girls. The shocked couple said yes and forever changed the lives of those twins, Sarah and Joan, for the better.

Their daughter Sarah is now married to Stephen Midas and works as a stay-at-home mom to four children in Chesapeake, VA, and also does some bookkeeping for Mary and Bill's shop. Their daughter Joan and her daughter live in Washington, DC, and Joan has gone from covering politics as an AP reporter in Atlanta to now working for some of those same elected officials she used to cover. I happen to be one of those, and Joan now serves on my staff in Washington. I know Mary and Bill are very proud of both their daughters.

I join with Joan, Sarah, Stephen and their children—Alex, Ben, Anna, Josie and Isabel—in congratulating Mary and Bill Kirchner on reaching their golden anniversary. Their marriage and their commitment to each other is an inspiration to us all.●

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE STATUS OF EACH OF THE 18 IRAQI BENCHMARKS. AS RECEIVED DURING RECESS OF THE SENATE ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2007—PM 25

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 1314 of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110–28) (the "Act"), attached is a report that assesses the status of each of the 18 Iraqi benchmarks contained in the Act and declares whether satisfactory progress toward meeting these

benchmarks is, or is not, being achieved.

The second of two reports submitted consistent with the Act, it has been prepared in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Defense; the Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq; the United States Ambassador to Iraq; and the Commander, United States Central Command.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, September 14, 2007.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following measure was discharged from the Committee on Environment and Public Works by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

S. 2006. A bill to provide for disaster assistance for power transmission and distribution facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-196. A resolution adopted by the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church relative to the repeal of discriminatory laws; to the Committee on Armed Services.

POM-197. A resolution adopted by the Commission of the City of Hollywood, Florida, supporting the Energy Efficiency Promotion Act; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM-198. A resolution adopted by the Council of the Town of Bay Harbor Islands, Florida, supporting resolution number 2007-430 of the governing board of the South Florida Water Management District; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

POM-199. A resolution adopted by the Commission of the City of Pompano Beach, Florida, urging Congress to appropriate funds necessary to bring the Herbert Hoover Dike into compliance with current levee protection safety standards; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

POM-200. A resolution adopted by the Council of the Town of Davie, Florida, urging Congress to appropriate funds necessary to bring the Herbert Hoover Dike into compliance with current levee protection safety standards; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

POM-201. A resolution adopted by the Council of the City of Long Beach, California, urging Congress to enact the Employee Free Choice Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

POM-202. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging Congress to provide drought relief to Texas; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 67

Whereas, the State of Texas continues to endure substantial economic losses due to a prolonged drought that has crippled the state for nearly two years; the loss of crops and livestock and drought-induced fires have left the state's farmers and ranchers in desperate need of continued federal assistance to offset the losses suffered as a result of this natural disaster; and

Whereas, the drought has cost the state nearly \$2.5 billion in total crop loss, more

than \$1 billion of which is attributed to a decrease in the cotton harvest, the state's number one cash crop; in addition, the latest forecasts for 2006 show the state's wheat harvest has decreased by more than 60 percent, corn production is down by 26 percent, soybean production has decreased by more than 30 percent, and the state's production of peanuts and sorghum is expected to be down by 40 percent; and

Whereas, an estimated \$1.6 billion in livestock losses, as well as the rising cost of hay and supplemental feed, have forced any ranchers to sell their cattle earlier than anticipated, which will undoubtedly cause a decrease in the beef supply for several years; all told, the total agricultural loss to the state stands at more than \$4 billion; and

Whereas, this dire economic impact is shared by the businesses that support the agriculture community, specifically those in rural areas, where projections estimate the loss to be nearly \$8 billion; the businesses affected include those that provide equipment or machinery, supplies, feed, and professional services such as veterinarians; and

Whereas, adding insult to injury, the drought has resulted in more than 21,000 fires, burning in excess of two million acres between January and November, 2006, and contributing to the loss of 5,000 miles of fence and 5,000 cattle in the Panhandle alone; the fires in the northern regions of the state have certainly contributed to the diminution in hay production, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that 77 percent of Texas' hay production was lost during the same period; and

Whereas, to alleviate this financial burden, the Texas Department of Agriculture will administer a total of \$16.1 million in assistance received from the USDA to eligible livestock producers in 216 drought-stressed counties, but with more than \$12 billion in total economic loss as a direct result of the drought, more assistance is needed; the devastation to crops and livestock in the number two agricultural state in the nation has put a financial strain on Texas farmers and ranchers, and it is imperative that the federal government continue to assist the individuals and families that have suffered during this time; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to provide further drought relief to Texas; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-203. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois urging Congress to require the Department of Agriculture to conduct a study and report on the nutritional value of the country's school lunches; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 11

Whereas, we, as a people, must not feed our children fatty and sugary foods on a daily basis because it leads to obesity and diabetes; therefore, be it

Resolved, by the House of Representatives of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly of the State of Illinois, That State Representative Monique D. Davis and the rest of the House of Representatives urge the Congress of the

United States of America to require the United States Department of Agriculture to conduct a study and report on the nutritional value of the country's school lunches; and be it further

Resolved, That suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to the President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and each member of the Illinois congressional delegation.

POM-204. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois urging the federal government to meet all of the financial obligations of the GI Bill; to the Committee on Armed Services.

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 123

Whereas, on June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the "Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944", better known as the "GI Bill of Rights"; and

Whereas, the bill at first was the subject of intense debate and parliamentary maneuvering, but has since been recognized as one of Congress' most important acts; and

Whereas, during the past five decades, the law has made possible the investment of billions of dollars in education and training for millions of veterans, and the nation has in return earned many times that investment in increased taxes and a dramatically changed society; and

Whereas, the law also made possible the loan of billions of dollars to purchase homes for millions of veterans and helped to transform the majority of Americans from renters to homeowners; and

Whereas, the 1944 GI Bill provided six benefits: education and training; loan guarantees for a home, farm, or business; unemployment pay; job-finding assistance; top priority for building materials for VA hospitals; and military review of dishonorable discharges; the home loan program is the only feature of the original bill that is still in force; and

Whereas, the original GI Bill ended in 1956, but subsequent GI Bills have continued the original bill's education and training benefits; the bill currently in effect is the Montgomery GI Bill, which provides benefits for veterans who served after July 1, 1985, and for military reservists; and

Whereas, in signing the original GI Bill, President Roosevelt stated that the Bill "gives emphatic notice to the men and women in our armed forces that the American people do not intend to let them down"; and

Whereas, our servicemen and women have sacrificed much for our country, and continued funding of GI Bill benefits is imperative to ensure that they are treated with the respect they deserve: Therefore be it

Resolved, by the House of Representatives of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly of the State of Illinois, that we urge the federal government to meet all of the financial obligations of the GI Bill; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be sent to President George W. Bush, federal Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson, each member of the Illinois Congressional delegation, and the Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.

POM-205. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Michigan urging Congress to enact H.R. 2927; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 89

Whereas, H.R. 2927 sets tough fuel economy standards without off ramps or loopholes, by requiring separate car and truck standards to meet a total fleet fuel economy between 32 and 35 mpg by 2022—an increase of as much as 40 percent over current fuel economy standards—and requires vehicle fuel